

# The Orlando Innamorato

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THE ORLANDO INNAMORATO TRANSLATED INTO PROSE FROM THE ITALIAN OF  
FRANCESCO BERNI AND INTERSPERSED WITH EXTRACTS IN THE SAME STANZA AS THE  
ORIGINAL BY WILLIAM STEWART ROSE  
W. BLACKWOOD EDINBURGH AND T. CADELL LONDON MDCCCXXIII

some virtue or vice, we almost always know what they are to do, though their actions are often unnatural, if considered as the actions of human beings. Hence it is that we are never entertained with pictures of manners in the *Faery Queen*^ while these form one of the great charms of the poems with which I am contrasting it. It may however be said with justice, that we are to ascribe this more picturesque effect of allegory, rather to the spirit of the age than to that of the fabulist. For it is perhaps true that all early fable is purely allegorical; that this is by degrees mixed up with other circumstances, and it is in this mixed character that it is most conducive to poetical effect. But in a later age and later process of refinement, when there is a greater tendency to abstract, allegory is stripped of her adventitious ornaments, and is at last forced upon us in poetry, painting, and sculpture, unveiled, or unencompassed by that sort of pleasing halo which is necessary to give her effect.

But whether we are to ascribe Boiardo's success in this particular to the character of his age, or to his own superior judgment, there is, I think, no doubt about the fact, and

there is, I think, as little difficulty in conceding to my author, upon other grounds, the praise of skill in executing the singular work of which he was the architect. This extraordinary man was Matteo Maria Boiardo, count of Scandiano, and a native of Reggio in the Modenese, who flourished in the beginning of the sixteenth century. These are circumstances the more worthy of mention, as some of them tend to explain what may seem most strange in the composition of the *Innamorato*; such as the provincial character of the diction, and more especially that careless and almost contemptuous tone between jest and earnest, which dis

*H Id* ^ TO HENRY RICHARD, LORD HOLLAND, *Ofc. Sfc.* Who, at a late period of my labours upon the "*Furioso*," suggested the present work as its necessary prologue. Kind peer, who, mid the tempest of debate, Hast gladly wooed and won the Southern muse, Where, crowned with fruit and flower of mingling hues, She in a grove of myrtle keeps her state, This I had entered by a poster n gate, Like stranger, who no certain path pursues, Or garden's lord, that hath his own to choose, Hadst thou not shewn a better entrance late: That portal led me to Morgan's \* towers, Where fierce Orlando found the dame at play; And though, too fast for me, from fields of flowers, She flies to savage waste, and will not stay, It will content me but to paint her bowers, If this be granted by the scornful fay. *William Stewart Rose.* \* See the adventure of Morgans, the type of Fortune, who, flying from her garden into a wilderness, is taken by Orlando, Book II.

#### INTRODUCTION.

It is many years since I first entertained a vague idea of translating the *Orlando Furious* and circumstances of little importance to the reader, led me more recently to undertake it in earnest. This work was again laid down; and afterwards resumed at the instance of a distinguished friend; and by an odd coincidence, I am indebted also to the suggestion of another eminent person for the idea of the present translation of the *Orlando Inamorata*, which, I should observe, is intended to be auxiliary to that, my first and greater undertaking, though I need scarcely say, that the story of Board is a necessary prologue to the poem of Ariosto.

It was my intention to have translated the first mentioned work, exactly upon the model adopted by Tress an in his version of the French romances, a scheme afterwards executed with so much better success, by my late excellent friend, Mr. George Ellis, in his English work of the same description. A further consideration of the subject, however, induced me to imitate them only in their general plan of illustrating a compendious prose translation by extracts, without seeking to add poignancy to this, by what might give a false idea of the tone of my original. I recollected that I stood in a very different predicament from that of either of these authors; that, to compare my work with (he one, which is most likely to be familiar to my readers, the *6 Specimens of early English Romances*, the originals are composed in a spirit of gravity which can hardly be confused with the gay style of the translator, and therefore nobody can be misled by the vein of pleasantry which runs through Mr. Ellis's work, and which is sure to be exclusively ascribed to the author of the *Ttifacimento*. This, however, would possibly not be the case with me, as the *Innamorato* is in a great measure a humour- pus work, of which I might give a false impression, by infusing into it a different species of wit, from that which distinguishes it; â€” a consideration which induced me to adopt the scheme I have pursued in the following sheets.

This project is to give a mere ground-plan of the Gothic edifice of Board, upon a small scale, accompanied with some elevations and sections of the chambers; which I have sought to colour after my original: or, (to speak more plainly,) the reader is to look for the mere story in my prose abridgement, while he may form some notion of its tone and style,

from the stanzas with which it is interspersed.

The *story* indeed, which seems most likely to interest the English reader, is that which took a strong possession of the imagination of Milton, who refers with more apparent enthusiasm to the *Innamorato*, than to the *Furioso*, and whose apparent preference is justifiable, if a richer stream of invention, and more consummate art in its distribution, are legitimate titles to admiration. In this latter qualification more especially, Board, however inferior as a poet, must be considered as a superior artist to Ariosto; and weaving as complicated a web as his successor, it is curious to observe how much he excels him as a story-teller. The tales, indeed, of Ariosto, (and the want of connexion among these is, in my eyes, his most essential defect) are so many loose episodes, which may be compared to parallel streams, flowing towards one reservoir, but through separate and independent channels. Those of Board, on the contrary, are like waters, that, however they may diverge, preserve their relation to the parent river, to which their accession always seems necessary, and with which they reunite, previous to its discharging its contents into their common resting-place. A short example may serve to illustrate what I have laid down. A damsel in the *Innamorato* relates to Rinaldo the adventures of two worthies named and a narration which is interrupted, and which, though good in itself, at first appears to be an insulated episode. Rinaldo, however, afterwards falls in with and his friend; and this history, thus resumed, unites itself naturally with that of the paladin. It is thus that all the stories are dove-tailed one into the other, and form a mosaic, as striking from the nice union of its parts, as from the brilliancy of its colours.

Board's art, though here indeed he cannot be said to excel Ariosto, is as conspicuous also in the direction of the strange under-current of allegory which pervades his poem, as it is in the distribution of his stream of story; while the sort of esoteric doctrines conveyed by it, gives a mysterious interest even to what we imperfectly comprehend.

Such indeed is the case with many of the fables of the *Odyssey*, and even of the *Iliad*; where the allegory, moreover, is always subservient to poetry, and poetry is never made subservient to allegory. This remarkable piece of judgment in the Greek poet has, I think, been well imitated both by Board and Ariosto, and it is the neglect of this principle which has made allegory so often offensive in the *Faery Queen* of Spenser. The obtrusive nature of this has been well compared by Mr. George Ellis, in his *Specimens of the early English poets*, to a ghost in day-light. It is, moreover, destructive to all character; for Spenser's heroes being mere abstract personifications of extinguishes his poem. It is doubtless on this account that Ugo observes, in an ingenious critique on the Italian romantic poets, in the *Quarterly Review* \*, that he tells his story in the tone of a feudal baron; thus applying to him more justly what M. de Balzac has objected to another; of whom he says, "quill test compo rte son poem e com me prince sea e tats. Crest en vertex de Bette quill reconnect point lo is, et quill Se met au Du adroit com mun."

After speaking of the mode in which he arranged his work, it is a natural transition to the substance with which Board built. This shews strong internal evidence of having been In an article purporting to be a review of *Whistlecraft's poem*, (now entitled *The Monks and Giants*,) and *The Court and Parliament of Beasts*. \*J\* A single circumstance, which I cite, because it can be appreciated by every body, would convince me that such stories as are to be found in the *Innamorato* were not the growth of Board's century. No author of that age could have imagined the friendly ties of alliance and consanguinity between Christians and though such fictions are justified by facts: taken, in the main, from the old French romances of Charlemagne, or rather from Italian works, raised upon their foundation. Hooke mentions one of these, called *Aspramonte*, &c., of uncertain date, and we have the titles of two others, which were anterior to the *Innamorato*, one called *do Carlo Mag no e die*

*Paladin i do Francis*, printed in 1481; the other printed in 1491, and entitled *La Historic real do Francis, eke die Paladin i e do Carlo Mag no in seize libre*. Some indeed would seem to deny that Board had dug in these mines, and would wish us to believe, that he not only compounded but manufactured the thus we learn from Gibbon that like relations existed between Greeks and Turks, and (as we are informed by Mr. Lockhart, in the preface to his *Spanish Ballads*, a work which presents as striking pictures of manners as of passion) between Spaniards and Moors. Nor need such things surprise us, though the barriers which now separate Christian and render them impossible. Nations are like individuals, and when they are brought into close and constant intercourse, of whatever kind, their passions, good or bad, must be kindled by the contact.

materials with which he wrought. Such at least would appear to have been the drift of one, who observes that and were names of certain of the vassals of But if he means to insinuate by this, that Board was not also indebted to the other source for his fictions and characters, as well might a critic of to-day, contend that the author of the *Monks and Giants*, who writes under the name of *Whistlecraft*, had not borrowed the idea of their cause of quarrel from Pulpit, because he has given ridiculous modern names to some of his giants; or that he had not taken the leaders amongst his *dramatis ponce* from the romances of the *Round Table*, because he has conferred "two leopards' faces," that is, his own arms, on the single knight, who perishes in Sir Tristan's successful expedition.

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